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RUMANIAN MILITARY AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES
AS REPORTED IN YUGOSLAV PRESS

The following report includes information on military prepara-
 tions along the Yugoslav border, Soviet troops in Galati, Rumanian
 deportees, and the Yugoslav Association of Political Emigrants From
 Rumania.

Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.⁷

Conditions in Rumania

After several months of planning, Capt Ioan Gheorghiu and Lt Constantin Boris, Rumanian Air Force pilots, escaped to Yugoslavia on 5 July because they did not agree with the present political system in Rumania and because they were particularly shocked by the miserable condition of Rumanian workers and villagers.^(1, 2) The escape was made in the following manner. Captain Gheorghiu, who was Chief of Staff of the 180th Rumanian Fighter Regiment based in Lugoj, arranged a training flight involving four aircraft. He and Boris took the best aircraft, Messerschmitt 109 G6s, equipped themselves with oxygen equipment, and assigned slower aircraft to the other two pilots.

Gheorghiu and Boris maintained an authorized flight altitude of 3,000 meters for a brief period and then began climbing to an altitude the other two pilots could not reach because they lacked oxygen equipment. When they had left their companions behind, they cut off radio communication with their home base and began descending, at times flying at tree-top level to evade any fighters or antiaircraft fire from border airfields.

After landing in Yugoslavia the two escaped pilots commented freely on political and economic conditions in Rumania, and the order of battle, disposition, training, and other information on the Rumanian Air Force. Their story was as follows. Lugoj airfield, located 65 kilometers from the Yugoslav border, had 32 Messerschmitts, eight Soviet fighter aircraft, two night-flying aircraft,

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one Rumanian reconnaissance plane, and one Rumanian Aero-45 special plane.(1) The last named is a civil aircraft converted for military purposes, equipped with photographic equipment which carries a load of 240 meters of film, and takes 20 x 30 [centimeter?] photographs.(1, 3) It has a crew of three, commanded by Major Sculei, whose sole mission is to photograph Yugoslav territory; he is responsible directly to the regimental commander. From 24 April to 5 July, this plane spent 40 flying hours over Yugoslav territory.(1) The regiment was due to receive another aircraft of the same kind.(3)

The pilots stated that approximately one month ago [June] a villa near the airfield was emptied of its civilian inhabitants and transformed into a laboratory for developing photographs. Only the regimental commander had access to the laboratory until an engineer from Bucharest was assigned to it.

The pilots went on to say that Yugoslav territory was photographed not only by Rumanians. At the end of May 1952, a Soviet Il-2 with a seven-man Soviet crew, arrived at Lugoj for the purpose of photographing Yugoslav territory. After waiting 3 days for clear weather, it returned to Bucharest without accomplishing its mission. A week later another aircraft of the same type arrived. The Soviet crew chief requested two fighters to fly cover to the Yugoslav border. The Il-2 spent 4 days at the airfield, during which it logged 10 flying hours and participated in violations of Yugoslav air space.(1)

The fliers declared that the special mission of the 180th Fighter Regiment, which was transferred to Lugoj airfield from Rosiori-de-Vedi, is to attack without warning, to destroy civilian or military aircraft attempting to fly across the border, or attempting to fly outside its general flight pattern.(1, 3) Because of this, they said, the 180th is not a part of a specific division but is responsible directly to the Rumanian Air Force Command in Bucharest. Four to six times a month several squadrons are alerted to fly toward Yugoslav territory, nominally because headquarters has reported that Rumanian aircraft are escaping. These squadrons have frequently violated Yugoslav air space without finding any escaping aircraft, denoting that their mission has been to frighten the Yugoslav population.(1)

The fliers further stated that air force regiments from the Lugoj and Craiova airfields are also assigned to commit provocations and fly over or near the frontier to frighten Yugoslavs; aircraft from the airfield in Deva are to be assigned this mission also.(3, 4) Operational units with jet aircraft are stationed along the Yugoslav frontier.(2) Airfield's are being planned for Caransebes and Timisoara.(2, 4)

A MIG-15 equipped regiment, stationed at Craiova airfield (built in April 1951), is under the absolute command of 20 Soviet pilots and seven Soviet instructors, the fliers continued. The regiment is on constant alert; soldiers and pilots find conditions difficult to endure. Lieutenant Boris related that three young pilot officers, Nicola Mandal, Ion Rain, and Ioan Florea went to Bucharest to protest against the regimen at Rumanian airfields. They were promised that everything would be taken care of, but several days after their return, the Rumanian Air Force Command summoned them back to Bucharest. Nothing has been heard of them since.

The fliers stated that another airfield for jet aircraft is located at Caracal-Deveselu. Although not fully completed, fighter regiment crews have already been transferred to the field and MIG-15s from the USSR are expected at any moment. The regimen here is similar to or even worse than at Craiova, they said. The Rumanian Air Force Command has few pilots whom it considers loyal enough to be trusted with jet aircraft.(3)

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According to the pilots, aircraft of Soviet origin manned by Rumanian pilots are also used to violate Yugoslav air space.(2, 4) Rumanian units coordinate their anti-Yugoslav activities with Hungarian and Bulgarian units; operational units stationed near the Yugoslav border are under a single command.(2, 3) There is direct telephone communication with a special code between Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Rumanian units on the Yugoslav border, which are on constant alert status.(2, 4) A direct telephone line and a special code connects the Lugoij airfield with the Keckemet airfield in Hungary. Similar communications maintained by the USSR exist between airfields with jet aircraft.(2, 3)

Rumanian Air Force personnel, especially officers, the fliers reported, are very well paid. Privileges and awards given to Rumanian officers serve to support the present regime. Captain Ioan stated that instructions to Rumanian officers emanate from Moscow. At celebrations most of the eulogies and appreciation go to the USSR.

The pilots went on to say that Soviet control over ground forces and air forces in Rumania began in 1949. A large number of so-called advisers from the USSR, now in air force divisions and larger units, give directives and control operations, they stated. According to Lieutenant Boris, training and political education of Rumanian soldiers and officer cadres is done by separate groups of Soviet advisers. The Rumanian Air Force is supplied principally with Soviet aircraft, among which are many jet aircraft.(2)

In June 1951, a Hungarian Air Force delegation, headed by the commander of the air force, came to Rumania to inspect Rumanian airfields, ascertain the quality of the runways, and the like, the pilots continued. They went on to say that a similar Rumanian delegation is preparing to go to Hungary soon.(3)

The fliers stated that a group of Rumanian flyers headed by Lieutenant Acting Lieutenant Colonel Dumitru Piturca escaped to Yugoslavia in March. A month later a reign of terror began in the Rumanian Army, especially in the air force, they said. All those on the unreliable list were arrested. At a conference with air force unit commanders, Air Force General Bodnarus asked for a report on "all bandits, who should be thrown out of the air force." As a result, they continued, 80 percent of the senior pilots and 30 percent of the junior pilots were summarily dismissed, without being paid for their last month of service. Six pilots were discharged from the 180th Fighter Regiment, while 200 were arrested in the air force.(2, 4) All those discharged and their families were expelled from quarters, without even receiving transportation cards to take them back to their homes. Many were arrested and shot or deported to unknown places.(4) All other air force officers and pilots were placed under a detailed investigation which lasted over a month.

The fliers said that among the first arrested was Maj Gen Constantin Dorcea, chief of Territorial Defense in Bucharest, who was later shot.(2) Lieutenant Paun, who had been chief of Territorial Defense in the sector from where the flyers flew over the border, was also shot, they stated.(3) The following were arrested, according to the pilots: Capt Stefan Ilasijevic, commander of the regiment in which Piturca and the others served; Maj Nicola Cunti, chief of Operations of the Air Force Command in Bucharest; Major Popescu (fnu), commander of the division which included Piturca's regiment; Sub Col Gen Paul Verdes, chief of the General Staff in Bucharest; and Major General Buctis. After the Piturca group escaped in March, all personnel at the airfield, all personnel in Piturca's unit, and all personnel in the Territorial Defense Section of the Air Force Command in Bucharest were arrested.(2, 3) The fliers said that arrests in Rumania had been so common lately that they were daily occurrences. After the removal of Ana Pauker, Vasile Luca, and Teohari Georgescu,

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many arrests were made in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The fliers stated that although the Rumanian press did not mention this, it is reliably known that about 3,000 militiamen from the province of Plesti were arrested.

The fliers stated that there were revolts and strikes in Rumanian villages and cities because of repressive measures against the peasants, who must turn over 70 percent of their grain to the state. In the beginning of 1952, compulsory delivery of meat was also introduced. Workers receive miserable pay. Peasants cannot even retain white flour to improve their bread.

Open revolt broke out in 1951, the fliers stated. In Comaneasca in the Vlasca area the militia killed one woman and seriously wounded three women who were seeking food. About 100 peasants were killed in Viscari, in the Vlasca area, where they turned on the militia with hoes, pitchforks, and all available arms, the fliers concluded.(3)

Yugoslav-Rumanian Border Fortifications

Over 600 Rumanian soldiers have recently been building barbed-wire entanglements and laying mines along the entire Yugoslav-Rumanian border, in the vicinity of Hetin, Radojevo, Jaksicev, Nincicevo, Soltur, and Sveti Hubet. Working in groups of 20, the soldiers are controlled by jeep-borne officers who regularly visit the sectors where the work is being done.(5) On 8 July, about 180 soldiers were building barbed-wire entanglements between Canalul Bega and Jaksicev. On 9 July, 100 soldiers were laying mines 3 kilometers northeast of Soltur on the way to Radojevo, while about 90 soldiers were building barbed-wire entanglements 2½ kilometers northeast of Jaksicev.(6) On 11 July, 135 soldiers installed barbed-wire entanglements and laid mines 4 kilometers north of Nakova, northeast of Nincicevo, and east of Netina.(7)

Politika comments that such activity is in line with the aggressive intent of the Soviet bloc toward Yugoslavia, and also serves to prevent the escape of Rumanian military and civil personnel into Yugoslavia, which has been increasingly frequent of late.(5)

Soviet Troops in Rumania

A Soviet unit of 600-700 men is stationed in Galati, Rumania. The insignia on the epaulets of the officers and noncommissioned officers are those of motorized and tank troops.

About 100 Soviet women who wear military uniforms are stationed in Galati. They are housed in a hotel, and are frequently seen in the city in groups of three or five. They do not carry arms.(8)

Rumanian Deportees

Borba on 14 July reported that Rumanian deportees, who are sent by the Rumanian authorities to the Baragan wilderness, can only be employed on state farms, where they are paid 5 lei and their food daily. They and deported members of the Yugoslav minority have been resettled in Culnita, Gosec, Vasilescu, Vasa Diga, Calaras-Noi, Dragalin-Noi, and other places.

According to escapees from Baragan, the paper continued, deportees are forced to build their own huts from mud. In some places large buildings have been built with large rooms in which are housed 100-150 persons, who are forced to sleep on bare floors. Mange and typhus are prevalent, the paper stated, but nothing is done to alleviate them. Borba went on to say that food given to deportees employed on state farms is poor and monotonous. Workers on state farms

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can earn a maximum of 150 lei monthly; a smoker could spend 90 lei on tobacco alone, the paper said. Certain amounts for taxes, broken dishes, and the like are deducted from the pay of deportees; they are forbidden to listen to radios, read certain newspapers, leave their camps, gather in groups for discussion, or to have any visitors, not even relatives. Borba stated that the relatives of one peasant came from Timisoara to visit him but were caught by the police and sent to work on the Danube-Black Sea Canal.(9)

Association of Rumanian Political Emigrants in Yugoslavia

On 14 July in Svetozarevo the founding convention of the Association of Political Emigrants From Rumania (Udrusenja politickih emigranata iz Rumunjske) was held with 40 delegates attending.(10. 4) The 15 July 1952 issue of Borba states that the association convened its second annual convention on 14 July.(4) The convention was also attended by delegates from associations of political emigrants from Albania, Bulgaria, and Hungary, as well as the secretary of the srez committee of the Communist Party in Svetozarevo, the president of the municipality (predsjednik gradske općine), and others, who greeted the convention and wished it success.(4)

Georgi Dimitrij [not identified], who emphasized the crude exploitation of Rumania by mixed companies, stated that the Rumanians are resisting the government's policies. The people are railing against Soviet oppression and exploitation despite the terrorism of security agencies, jailings, and deportations to camps.

The discussion following Dimitrij's report was participated in by Capt Ioan Gheorghiu and Lt Constantin Boris.

Ion Ginea, former commissar of the 17th Air Force Regiment in Brasov who escaped to Yugoslavia in March 1952 with the aid of a Heinkel 111 aircraft, was made president of the association.(10)

SOURCES

1. Zagreb, Borba, 13 Jul 52
2. Belgrade, Politika, 12 Jul 52
3. Zagreb, Borba, 12 Jul 52
4. Ibid., 15 Jul 52
5. Belgrade, Politika, 10 Jul 52
6. Ibid., 14 Jul 52
7. Zagreb, Borba, 16 Jul 52
8. Belgrade, Politika, 19 Jul 52
9. Zagreb, Borba, 14 Jul 52
10. Zagreb, Borba, 21 Jul 52

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